

Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /099 W

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R 201808Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1781

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7628

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BL

SUBJ: CURRENT VIEWS OF VICTOR PAZ ESTENSSORO (VPE)

1. THE FOLLOWING COMES FROM A RELIABLE MNR SOURCE WHO TALKED PRIVATELY WITH VICTOR PAZ ESTENSSORO FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS EARLIER THIS WEEK. THESE ARE THE VIEWS OF DR. PAZ AS EXPRESSED TO THE SOURCE.

2. IF HUMBOLDT & CO. ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO GET VPE EXILED BEFORE THE CONVENTION OF THE MNR IN JANUARY, VPE WILL CONTROL THE CONVENTION. WHAT THIS WOULD MEAN IS STILL CONJECTURAL, BUT PROBABLY THE MNR WOULD VOTE TO SUPPORT VPE'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW THE MNR FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, THE CONVENTION COULD VOTE TO ALLOW MNR MILITANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY ARE DOING SO IN THEIR OWN NAME AND NOT AS MNR REPRESENTATIVES.

3. VPE HAS CONCLUDED THAT BANZER'S SUCCESSOR WILL BE A MILITARY MAN; THAT THE ERA OF THE MILITARY IN BOLIVIA HAS NOT YET RUN ITS COURSE (AS IT HAS IN ARGENTINA); THAT THE MNR MUST, THEREFORE, BEGIN A SERIOUS DIALOGUE WITH THE MILITARY TO REASSURE THAT INSTITUTION THAT THE MNR IS
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PRO-NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, NOT ANTI-MILITARY, AND THAT THE MNR

IS THE DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE TO THE FAR LEFT IN THIS COUNTRY. VPE BELIEVES THAT THE BEST THE MNR COULD DO IN THE NEXT NATIONAL ELECTORAL CONTEST WOULD BE TO CAPTURE THE VICE -PRESIDENCY IN A MILITARY-MNR TICKET. SOURCE COMMENT: EVIDENTLY VPE IS READY TO START ON THE ROAD TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, AS HE HAS ALREADY CONTACTED PERSONS WHO COULD SERVE AS NEW AVENUES OF LIAISON BETWEEN HIMSELF AND VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

4. VPE HAS NO INTENTION OF FORMING ANY KIND OF LEFT-WING COALITION TO OPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT. IN FACT, THE MAIN REASON HE DECIDED TO TAKE THE MNR OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS BECAUSE HE SAW THE SILES ZUAZO FACTION (MNR-I) CAPTURING THE SUPPORT OF THE WORKING CLASS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MNR. IN OTHER WORDS, VPE DOES NOT WANT TO ALIGN HIMSELF WITH SILES ZUAZO, HE WANTS TO BE THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE TO THE FAR LEFT IN BOLIVIA. BY THE SAME TOKEN, WHEN GUEVARA ARCE (PRA) APPROACHED VPE TO SUGGEST A LEFT-OF-CENTER COALITION, PRESUMEDLY EXCLUDING THE MNR-I AND OTHER GROUPS IN EXILE, VPE TOLD GUEVARA THAT THE LATTER WAS AGAIN MIS-READING THE HISTORICAL MOMENT AND THAT THE FORMATION OF SUCH A COALITION NOW COULD ONLY LEAD TO ITS IMMEDIATE REPRESSION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

5. IF PAZ IS FORCIBLY EXILED NOW AND THE GOVERNMENT BEGINS A REPRESSIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MNR AND THE WORKING CLASS, HE MIGHT BE FORCED TO JOIN WITH OTHER EXILE AND CLANDESTINE EXTREMIST GROUPS TO COMBAT THE GOVERNMENT. PAZMMOULD MUCH PREFER TO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY IN THE ROLE OF ELDER STATESMAN WHO ENGAGES OCCASIONALLY IN CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM OR APPLAUSE FOR GOVERNMENTAL ACTION IN BENEFIT OF THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. HOWEVER, HE IS STILL WILLING AND ABLE TO FIGHT BACK IF PUSHED TOO HARD.

6. COMMENT: EMBOFF BELIEVES DR. PAZ INTENDED THESE MESSAGES TO GET TO THE EMBASSY AS WELL AS TO SOME MILITARY OFFICERS AND CHOSE THIS SOURCE FOR THAT PURPOSE.
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